



Muistiliitto

Alzheimer Centralförbundet Alzheimer Society of Finland

Are people with dementia equal in Finnish social security system?

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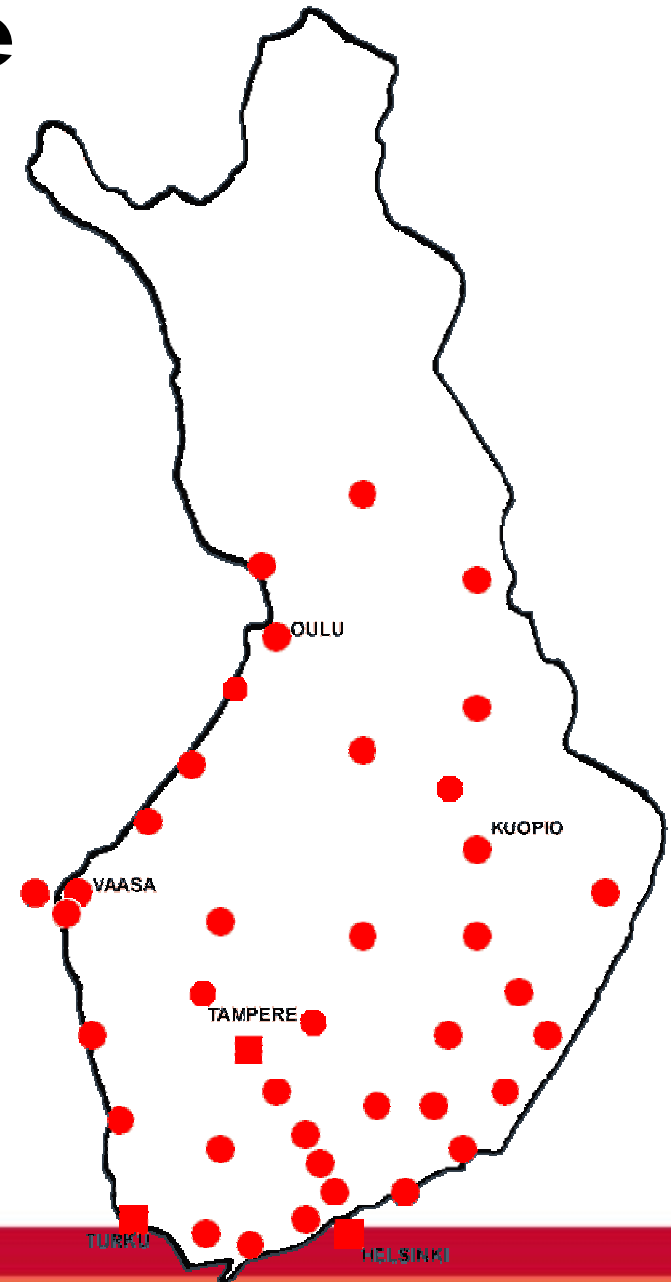
Alzheimer Society of Finland

- Established in 1988 to provide help and assistance for people with dementing illness and their caregivers
- A non-profit organization which is mainly funded by the Finnish Slot Machine Association
- In Finland 120 000 persons with dementia
 - 7 000 – 10 000 working age people with dementia
 - 13 000 new cases every year



The Society and the local associations

- Central Office in Helsinki, the capital city of Finland
- 3 District Offices
 - Northern Finland
 - Eastern Finland
 - *Western Finland*
- Central Society for 42 member associations around the country
 - 10 000 members
 - approximately 140 employees



The Study

The primary aim was to clarify how and if equality is achieved in the availability of Finnish social security

- 157 professionals interviewed using a questionnaire
- 8 people with dementing illness interviewed individually
- 4 caregivers interviewed individually to give supplement information

Finnish Social Security System

- The Finnish Constitution guarantees the right to social security and necessary income security for all people living in Finland
- Public and very extensive system
- Funded primarily by taxation
- Mainly responsibility of government and municipalities – nowadays also the private and the third sector play an important role

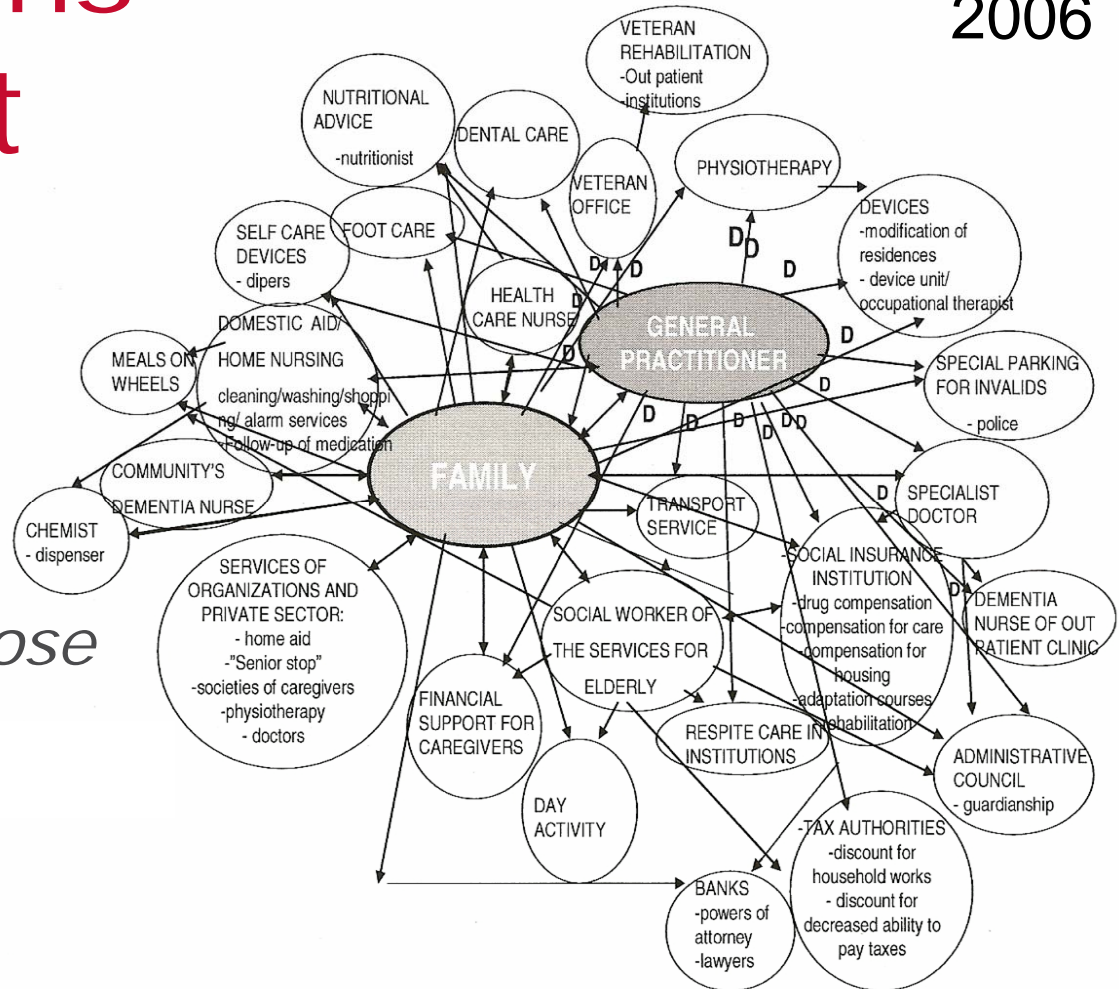
Various forms of support

Eloniemi-Sulkava et al.
2006

"It is almost like a jungle"

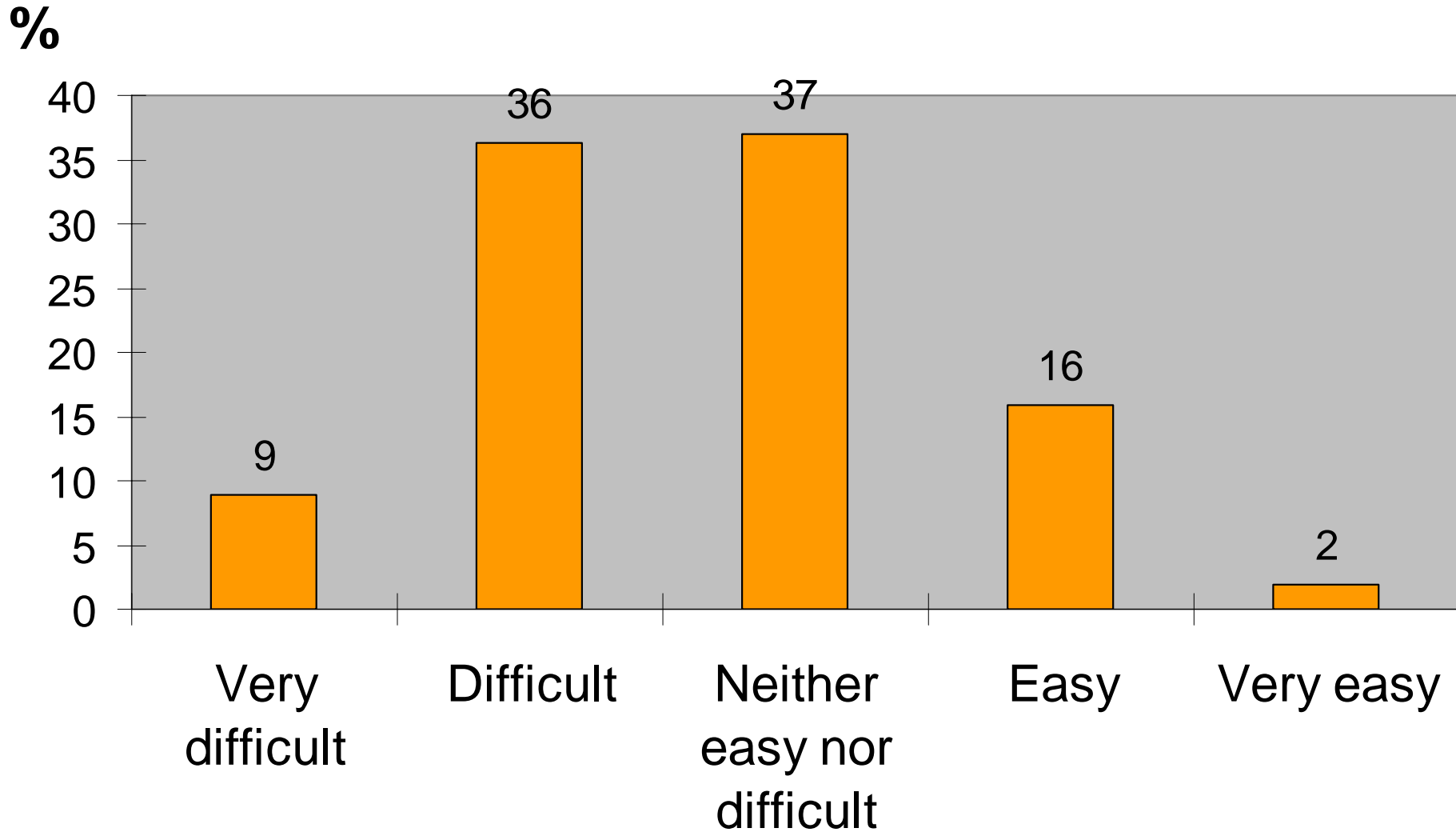
"I didn't understand anything about those application forms"

"It is almost easier to not apply"



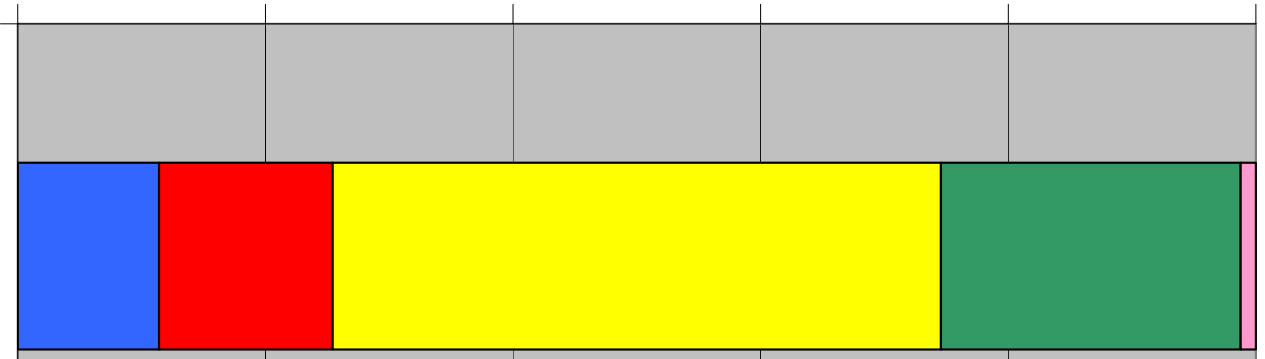
→ very difficult to master even for professionals

Applying social security (N=157)

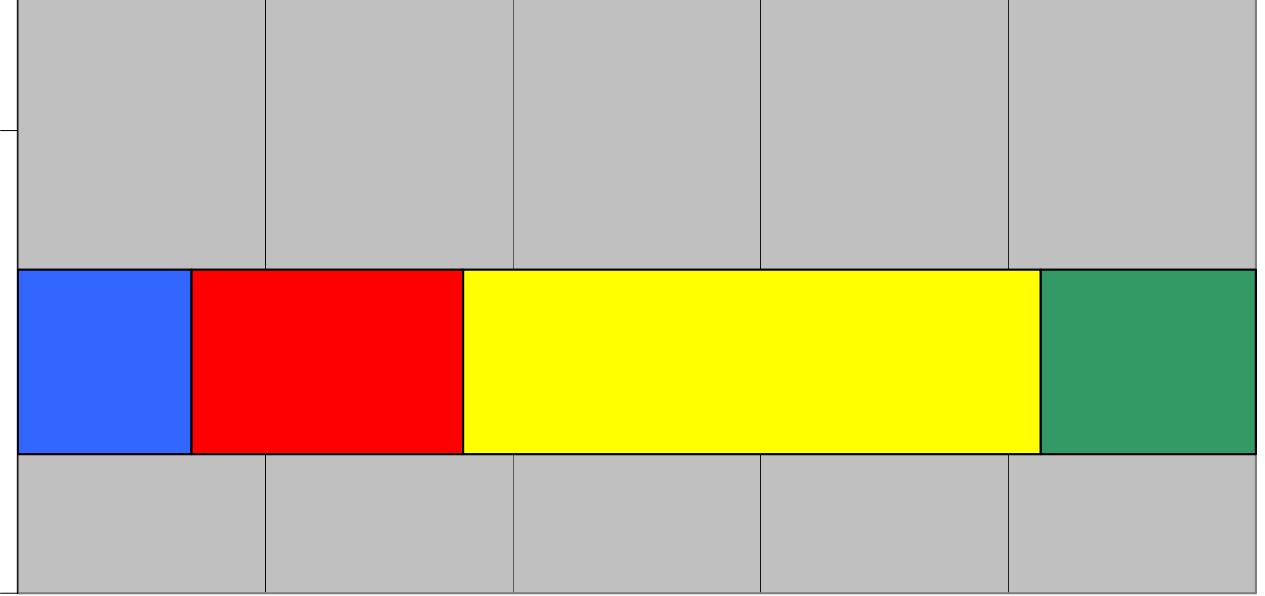


0 % 20 % 40 % 60 % 80 % 100 %

Person's
possibility to
express his/her
will when
applying social
security (N=157)



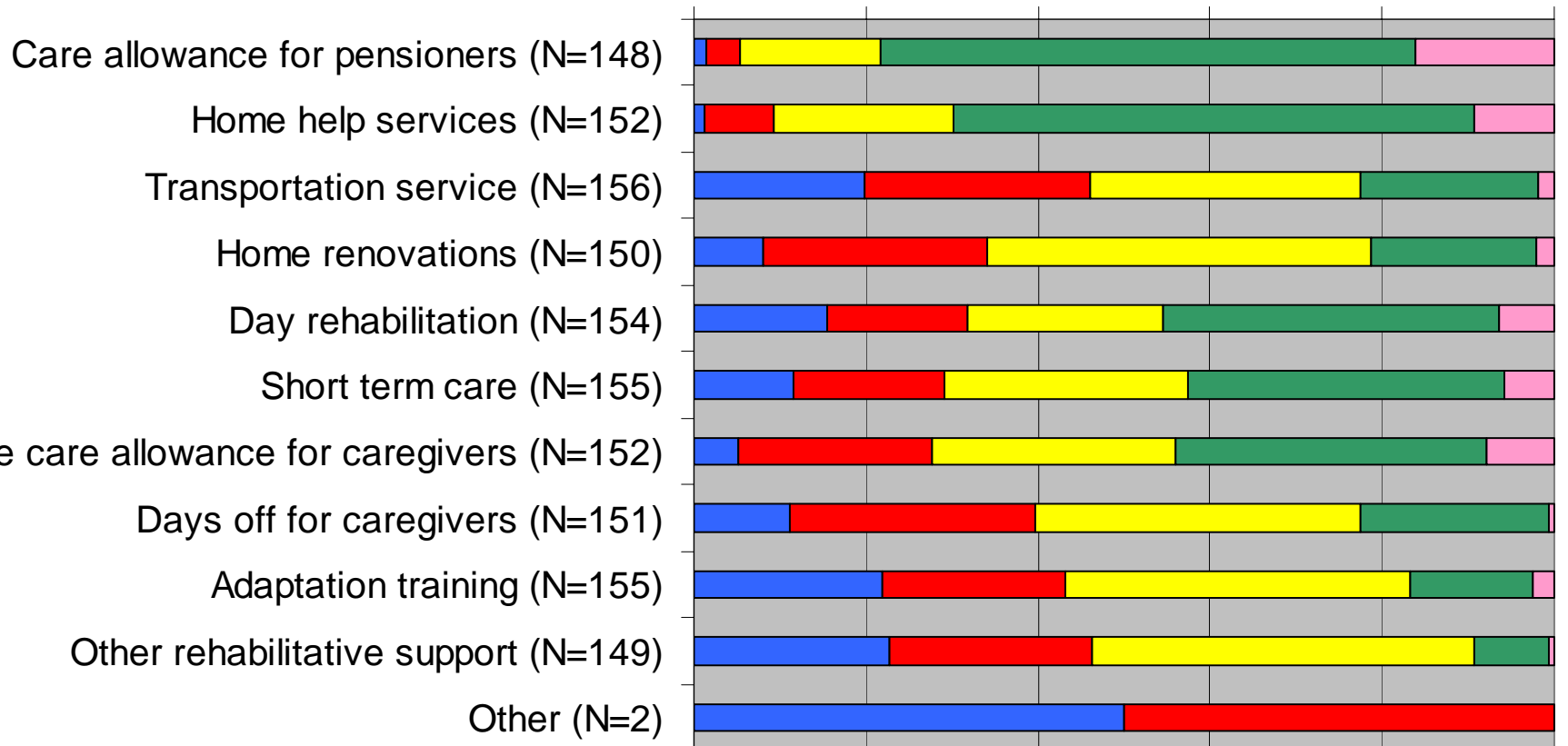
Person's opinion
or will is taken
into consideration
when applying
social security
(N=156)



Very badly Badly Neither well nor badly Well Very well

How equality is achieved in availability of social security when people with dementing illness and other diagnostic groups are compared?

0 % 20 % 40 % 60 % 80 % 100 %



Very badly Badly Neither well nor badly Well Very well

Results

FORM OF SOCIAL SECURITY	Badly/ very badly	Well/ very well
transportation service	46 %	22 %
adaptation training	43 %	17 %
other rehabilitative support	46 %	9 %

→ Certain forms of social security are not equally available

Why?

1. Social security legislation is interpreted mostly through the applicant's physical ability

cognitive impairment ↔ physical disability

dementia ↔ invalidity

2. Dementia is still too often considered a part of normal aging – lack of knowledge

"It is almost if you had any other disease than my Alzheimer's, you'll get the social security you need"

Conclusions

- People with dementia are not completely equal in the availability of public social security
- Finnish social security legislation is interpreted too narrowly through a person's physical ability
- Dementia is not seen as caused by neurological disease
- People with dementia feel they are considered unworthy of services given to people with physical disability or visible condition

**Thank you
for your attention !**



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